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ABSTRACT

Based on dissertation research, this study sought to determine the extent of agreement regarding the frequency of actual and ideal articulation practices among secondary and postsecondary directors in New York State (excluding New York City) schools. A survey instrument consisting of 69 objective and 14 open-ended questions was designed and mailed to 95 vocational administrators, with a response rate of 77 percent. The t-test for independent samples was used to determine the extent of agreement between opinions of secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical administrators on actual and ideal articulation practices, and the t-test for non-independent samples was used to rate agreement within the groups. The results of the survey indicate that secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical administrators were in general agreement with regard to the frequency of their actual use of 56 of the articulation practices. For the most part, both groups indicated that they were not actually using most of the items very often. Of the 69 questions, 31 items were most translatable for adult vocational education; these items were placed in four categories: administration, counseling, instruction, and program development. Based on combinations of conditions, recommendations for improvement were made for articulation between the two groups and within the groups. These recommendations included convening meetings to determine agreement and disagreement among administrators about the various practices identified in the 31 items and using the agreement items as the basis for workable solutions to articulation practices. (KC)

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THE ROLE OF ADULT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
IN ARTICULATION OF SECONDARY AND
POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

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The Role of Adult Vocational Education
in Articulation of Secondary and Postsecondary
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Introduction	1
The Original Study	2
Implications for Adult Vocational Education.	4
Establishment of Conditions.	5
Condition 1	5
Condition 2	5
Condition 3	5
Condition 4	5
Establishment of Combinations.	9
Combination A	9
Combination B	9
Combination C	9
Recommendations.	10
Actions for between-groups decision making.	10
Actions for within-groups decision making	11
Combination A	12
Combination B	12
Combination C	12
Summary	13
References	16

Implications derived from data extracted from a dissertation recently completed by one of the authors (Wilcox, 1982) are examined herein. The major concern of the original research was to identify actual and ideal articulation practices in New York State in order to make recommendations toward enhancing cooperation between secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical programs. The methods linking the problem with the research design, and results of the study, are treated in sections that follow.

Through the research, the opinions of the majority (77%) of vocational-technical program directors in New York State were obtained for over fifty articulation related items. Having secured responses from a substantial proportion of the original population enabled the researcher to assume the findings were fairly representative of that group's opinions regarding the chosen items. And, since New York is a large state in terms of number of vocational-technical programs and students, along with considerable demographic and geographic diversity, chances appear good that these opinions are held by others holding similar positions in other states.

Beginning with the review of the literature and on to the completion of the study, it became increasingly evident that some of the findings had implications for articulation of adult vocational-technical education with other agencies in and out of education. The research questions of the original study included concerns related to adult vocational-technical education. Therefore, the relationship between certain survey items and articulation of adult vocational-technical education are findings that can be useful in several ways. First, identification of these findings can be the starting point for future studies (Gay, 1980, pp 350). Giving credence to this possibility is that among the strengths of the original

research is that its design, conduct, and evaluation can be easily modified and replicated. Second, results from the dissertation survey items that are strongly related to articulation of adult vocational-technical education can be analyzed from that point of view. Thirdly, from this effort could emerge suggested actions aimed at improvement of articulation of adult vocational-technical education efforts. And finally, these suggestions in turn could be applied in school settings and/or subjected to additional research.

After offering a description of the original study and its overall results, 31 items are identified that fall into this category; and actions that could be taken to enhance articulation of adult vocational-technical education with other educational agencies and the business-industrial community are suggested. For some readers, the findings can be utilized as a basis for further research.

The Original Study

The need for articulation between secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical institutions has been acknowledged in most states over the years (Wilcox, 1982). The problem investigated in the study from which this paper is derived was the lack of information concerning opinions of New York State's vocational-technical program directors regarding actual and ideal articulation practices between secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical programs.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of agreement regarding the frequency of actual and ideal articulation practices among secondary and postsecondary directors in New York State excluding New York City schools.

Research Questions

There were two research questions:

Question 1: What is the extent of agreement between the opinions of secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical education directors on the (a) frequency of actual articulation practices? and (b) frequency of ideal articulation practices?

Question 2: What is the extent of agreement between opinions on frequency of actual and ideal articulation practices by vocational-technical directors in (a) secondary vocational schools and (b) postsecondary vocational schools?

Procedure

A survey instrument consisting of 69 individual objective items and 14 open-ended questions was designed. The questionnaire was mailed to 95 vocational administration (57 in the secondary sector and 38 in the public two-year colleges of the state). After several follow-ups, the response rate was 77%.

The t-test for independent samples was used to determine the extent of agreement between opinions of secondary, and postsecondary vocational-technical administration (between groups) on actual and ideal articulation practices. Within groups agreement between actual and ideal practices were examined by use of the t-test for non-independent samples.

Findings and Conclusions

Secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical administrators were in general agreement with regard to the frequency of their actual use of 56 of the articulation practices. For the most part, both groups indicated that they were not actually utilizing most of the items with a great deal of frequency. Broadly speaking, the similar extent of agreement was found between groups (51 of the items) for the ideal ratings.

Implications for Adult Vocational-Technical Education

Adult education has four broad functions that could be described as administration, counseling, instruction, and program development. It is reasonable to consider adult vocational-technical education as embracing these same functions. But each of these, in adult vocational-technical education, is shaped towards the business of dealing with work-oriented concerns.

As an aside, it should be noted that not all authorities in this field accept work-oriented school based activities as a part of adult education (see Paterson, 1979, p. 155 and p. 170; Carlson, 1976, p. 3-12). It seems that vocational-technical education met with the same reluctance of being accepted into early adult education that it encountered in public basic education earlier. But the trend is clear-activities dealing with acquisition of job-related skills and knowledge by workers is an important part of contemporary adult education (see UNESCO, 1977, for example). Many authorities on the matter now agree that adult education is targeted at helping people live more successfully (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982, p. 11; Gratten, 1955, p. 9). Also worthy of mention here is that various forms of adult vocational-technical education are offered by many agencies. In this group are governmental agencies (local, regional, state, federal), business-industry, voluntary organizations, museums, libraries, and the broadcast media. This paper focuses upon the articulation of adult vocational-technical education in the secondary and postsecondary education sectors.

The articulation of adult vocational-technical education, particularly in times of depressed resources, should be of great concern in the interest of providing comprehensive but non-redundant services. The suggestions offered herein, while derived from a study of secondary school and

two-year college vocational-technical program directors in one state, can be useful in enhancement of the delivery of adult vocational-technical education in a variety of settings.

An examination of the 69 questions in the original survey, conducted with an eye toward extracting those that were most translatable for adult vocational-technical education purposes, resulted in identification of 31 items. These were placed in four categories: administration (15 items), counseling (9 items), instruction (3 items), and program development (4 items). The items are displayed in Figure I.

Establishment of Conditions

The recommendations made at end of this paper were based upon the degree of agreement found in various combinations of four conditions. The conditions were identified based on the results of t-tests and are described below.

Condition 1. Significant differences existed between secondary and postsecondary respondents' ratings for ideal practices. Twelve of the thirty-one items met this criterion.

Condition 2. Significant differences were found between secondary and postsecondary respondents' ratings for actual practices. Six of the thirty-one items met this criterion.

Condition 3. Significant differences were identified between ideal and actual practices ratings of secondary school respondents. All of the items met this criterion.

Condition 4. Significant differences were found between the postsecondary school respondents' ratings of their ideal and actual practices. All of the items met this criterion.

Articulation Survey Items Relevant to Adult Vocational Education

Instruction

1. Secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges have developed joint skill centers in which faculty members from both levels can provide services.
2. Development of joint planning ventures between local institutions for the exchange of instructors, particularly in evening or part-time adult education programs.
3. Joint articulation conferences regularly scheduled for secondary and postsecondary faculty members, administrators, and counselors.

Counseling

4. Evaluation of students entering an occupational program in a two-year college as a basis for awarding college credits for similar occupational courses completed at the secondary level.
5. Provision of a shared counseling service between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges in order to meet the needs of job changers;
6. Provision of a shared counseling service between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges in order to meet the needs of disadvantaged people;
7. Provision of a shared counseling service between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges in order to meet the needs of homemakers returning to work;
8. Provision of a shared counseling service between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges in order to meet the needs of handicapped people;
9. Provision of a shared counseling service between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges in order to meet the needs of individuals involved with self-initiated learning activities.
10. Provision of joint placement services for students of secondary occupational schools and two-year colleges.
11. Organization of joint counselor workshops by two-year colleges and secondary vocational schools in each local area at least annually to update information on program articulation
12. Jointly established vocational assessment services are available to students at both the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Program Development

13. Occupational curricula continually updated and revised by secondary and postsecondary school representatives; including input of advisory committees, employers, and other resources.
14. Administration of jointly developed industrial surveys in order to determine employment opportunities and program needs.
15. Personnel representing both institutions jointly plan and promote adult continuing occupational education programs for the benefit of area citizens.
16. Provision of state agency endorsement and support for articulation of occupational education programs.

Administration

17. Agreement between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges to jointly establish off-campus instructional facilities for use by both institutions.
18. College credits or advanced placement awarded to students who successfully complete the following examinations in only the theoretical components of the occupational program;
19. both the skills and theoretical components of the occupational program.
20. Open entrance/open exit policy (i.e., students may start classes at any time and leave as soon as they are qualified for a job) used for admission of the students to the two-year college.
21. A jointly developed career education/orientation program exists to assist adults in making career choices and in recognizing occupational education opportunities offered by secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges.
22. Cooperation between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges in evaluating and awarding college credits for students' out-of-school experiences related to work experience;
23. Cooperation between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges in evaluating and awarding college credits for students' out-of-school experiences related to military service;
24. Cooperation between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges in evaluating and awarding college credits for students' out-of-school experiences related to non-traditional training;
25. Cooperation between secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges in evaluating and awarding college credits for students' out-of-school experiences related to other life encounters.
26. Administration of college level continuing occupational education programs by secondary occupational schools whenever it is more appropriate.

27. Administration of secondary level continuing occupational education courses by two-year colleges whenever it is more appropriate.
 28. Joint skill centers established for the purpose of providing prescription-type learning to people in need of occupational retraining or upgrading (i.e., employers prescribe the skills that their employees will need in order to perform their jobs).
 29. Establishment of Articulation Advisory Committees consisting of representatives from secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges.
 30. Secondary vocational schools and two-year colleges conduct cooperative public relations efforts.
 31. Appointment of joint advisory committees for similar occupational programs at both the secondary and two-year college levels.
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* Two rating scales were utilized: one for actual practices and the second for ideal practices. The scale intervals were:

- 5 = standard practices
- 4 = usual
- 3 = often
- 2 = occasional
- 1 = none

Establishment of Combinations

An examination of the four conditions show that 1 and 2 indicate significant differences between groups, and conditions 3 and 4 relate to significance differences within groups. The recommendations that follow are made in terms of whether action needs to be considered between groups (i.e. secondary and postsecondary directors) or within groups (i.e. decision makers and specialists within one of the institutional levels - secondary or postsecondary). Three combinations of conditions were found to exist, and the recommendations are offered to meet the requirements for achieving change through the institutional types involved. The reader is encouraged to refer to Table A for the following discussion.

Combination A

This situation is one in which all of the four previously described conditions existed. Items 19 and 26 (see Figure 1), both in the administration category, met this criterion.

Combination B

This case is comprised of those situations in which disagreement as to usage was found for three of the four practices settings (i.e. those items in which three of the four conditions previously described existed). This criterion was met by the following items (see Figure 1): item 3 (instruction); items 4, 10, and 11 (counseling); items 20, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, and 30 (administration).

Combination C

Included in this one are those circumstances where disagreement as to usage was found for two of the four practices settings. Without exception, each group (i.e. secondary school and two-year college directors) was discrepant

between actual and ideal practices for every item. Those cases where these disagreements were the only two for the particular item are classified as combination C, and includes the remainder of the items not mentioned in the two preceding combinations. These include items 1 and 2 (instruction); items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11 (counseling); item 14 (program development); items 17, 18, 21, 23, 25, and 31 (administration).

Recommendations

Two broad sets of recommendations have been offered, one for fostering between-group action on selected items, and the second for encouraging change-making within institutions. Suggested applications of these recommendations for each of the combinations are then summarized.

Actions for between-groups decision making

(a) Meetings of adult vocational-technical education decision makers within planning regions should be convened to identify the agreement and disagreement aspects of the articulation practices described in the survey by items under consideration. These should be verified and/or modified with the particular group of decision makers. Where consensus exists between members of the two groups, efforts should be made to readily implement these articulation practices so that the process involved might serve as a model for future articulation activities.

(b) Skillful conference leadership will be required for the next step: using the commonalities of agreement as a basis, persistent probing, prodding, and discussions aimed at compromising the areas of disagreement regarding implementation into workable solutions should be conducted. In some cases, task forces may need to be jointly established to resolve issues of disagreement or concern.

(c) The decision makers should then agree upon specific actions to be taken, followed by initiating concrete steps for early implementation with their respective adult vocational-technical education faculties and professional staffs. Critical actions at this point in the articulation process include the decision makers' designation of: (1) qualified persons to carry out the implementation phase; (2) inauguration of a follow-up feed back strategy to facilitate changes and refinements in action found to be necessary for successful completion of these articulation practices in adult vocational-technical education; (3) appropriate person(s) to monitor the articulation agreements on an ongoing basis.

Actions for within groups decision making

This set of recommendations is proposed for all the items considered, since in every case significant differences were found between actual and ideal practices with the secondary school groups, and also for the two-year colleges.

(a) Meetings should be convened by the appropriate decision makers for the purpose of reducing the discrepancies between actual and ideal practices, and to establish implementation priorities; (b) Special gatherings should be arranged according to the segment of the faculty and professional staff that would be responsible for the activity. In other words, the appropriate specialists within the four categories (instruction, counseling, program development, and administration) would be convened selectively on the basis of the item relevancy to their professional responsibilities. It is important that the meetings be convened by persons empowered to carry out decisions. Perhaps it would be advantageous to develop an articulation manual explaining policies, procedures, and persons

responsible for the coordination of vocational-technical programs. (c) After identification of those who should be involved, the leader should seek: (1) verification of the differences between actual and ideal practices regarding the item(s); (2) to focus the meeting upon factors that might encourage or hinder further articulation. (d) In many situations it might be necessary to establish task-oriented committees to deal with specific in-house obstacles, with predetermined report-back times. (e) Upon returning with suggestions, action should be taken with minimum delay, including assignments to appropriate faculty and staff to: (1) carry out the agreed upon actions; (2) conduct a follow-up to see that recommendations are implemented (and modified when necessary); (3) monitoring existing and new articulation agreements on a continuing basis. Having reviewed the two broad sets of recommendations, an explanation of their application to the three conditions is presented next.

Combination A

Only items 19 and 26 met this criterion. The actions for between groups should be carried out for conditions 1 and 2, and actions for within groups should be implemented for conditions 3 and 4.

Combination B

A total of 14 items were in this combination. The actions for between groups should be carried out for conditions 1 and 2, and actions for within groups should be implemented for conditions 3 and 4.

Combination C

A total of 15 items were found where disagreement was restricted to two of the four previously described conditions. It should be noted that conditions 3 and 4 were found for every item however. The actions for within groups should be implemented for these 15 items.

Summary

In Table A, types of recommendation (between groups or within group strategies) are listed by item. It should be noted that a number of the items require utilization of both kinds of recommendations.

Table A

Recommendations¹

Category	Between groups		Within groups	
Item	^a A	^b B	^c C	^d D
Instruction				
1			+	+
2			+	+
3		*	+	+
Counseling				
4	*		+	+
5			+	+
6			+	+
7			+	+
8			+	+
9			+	+
10	*		+	+
11	*		+	+
12			+	+
Program Development				
13			+	+
14			+	+
15			+	+
16			+	+

Note: ^aA = secondary vs. postsecondary (Ideal)
^bB = secondary vs. postsecondary (Actual)
^cC = secondary (Ideal vs. Actual)
^dD = postsecondary (Ideal vs. Actual)
 1* = Between groups recommendation
 + = Within groups recommendation

Table A (continued)

Recommendations¹

Category	Between groups		Within groups	
Item	A ^a	B ^b	C ^c	D ^d
Administration				
17			+	+
18			+	+
19	*	*	+	+
20	*		+	+
21			+	+
22	*		+	+
23			+	+
24		*	+	+
25			+	+
26	*	*	+	+
27	*		+	+
28		*	+	+
29	*		+	+
30	*		+	+
31			+	+

Note: ^aA = secondary vs. postsecondary (Ideal)
^bB = secondary vs. postsecondary (Actual)
^cC = secondary (Ideal vs. Actual)
^dD = postsecondary (Ideal vs. Actual)
 1* = Between groups recommendation
 + = Within groups recommendation

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